

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SAA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /091 W
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R 010502Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8995
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4348

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: LE, SY, PEPR, PINT
SUBJ: LEBANESE REACTION TO KHADDAM'S REPORTED CRITICISM
OF SARKIS

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. LEFTIST AS SAFIR REPORTED ON JULY 31 THAT A "MAJOR DIPLOMATIC CRISIS" BETWEEN BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS HAD BEEN AVOIDED WHEN SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM DENIED REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM BY THE FRENCH WEEKLY LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR.

2. KHADDAM HAD BEEN QUOTED AS SAYING SARKIS WAS "WISE AND CALM BUT INEFFECTIVE" BECAUSE HE FAILED TO TAKE "COURAGEOUS DECISIONS." ACCORDING TO THE MAGAZINE, KHADDAM ADDED "NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE LEBANESE WANT TO FORGET THE WAR. IF (SARKIS) WANTS TO GIVE THEM PEACE, HE MUST CRUSH THE FIVE PERCENT WHO REFUSE TO OBEY THE LAW."

3. RADIO BEIRUT ON JULY 29 QUOTED KHADDAM AS DENYING "CATE-CONFIDENTIAL

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GORICALLY" THE STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM BY THE FRENCH MAGAZINE. KHADDAM ALSO STRESSED HIS "APPRECIATION OF THE EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT SARKIS TO BOLSTER LEBANESE UNITY AND STABILITY," THE RADIO SAID.

4. NO LEBANESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL HAS COMMENTED PUBLICLY ON KHADDAM'S ALLEG STATEMENT, ALTHOUGH PHALANGIST VOICE OF

LEBANON ON JULY 30 CITED A PALACE SOURCE AS "EXPRESSING SURPRISE." THE VOICE OF LEBANON THEN CARRIED A STATEMENT BY NLP LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN, WHO SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE KHADDAM'S DENIAL. CHAMOUN ADDED THAT THE FIVE PERCENT OF THE LEBANESE "MR. KHADDAM WANTS DESTROYED" REPRESENT ALL OF LEBANON. END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: MOST LEBANESE PROBABLY SHARE CHAMOUN'S SUSPICIONS AND BELIEVE THAT KHADDAM WAS ACCURATELY QUOTED IN LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR. THEY PROBABLY VIEW KHADDAM'S STATEMENT AS ANOTHER INDICATION OF INCREASING SYRIAN DISSATISFACTION WITH SARKIS ON THE EVE OF KHADDAM'S SCHEDULED AUGUST 1 VISIT TO BEIRUT. END CONFIDENTIAL.
PARKER

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 01 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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